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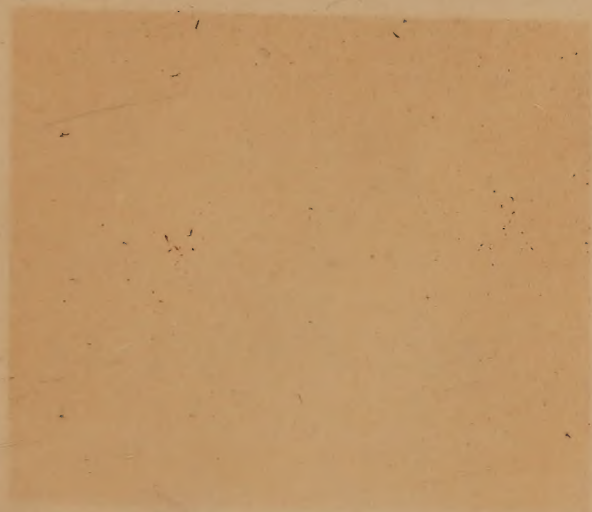
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RELIGION & LIFE

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THE FOUNDATIONS OF PERSONAL RELIGION

BY

THE DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S;

PROF. DAVID CAIRNS,
MODERATOR OF THE UNITED FREE CHURCH;

THE REV. W. FEARON HALLIDAY,
WOODBROOKE;

THE RIGHT REV. N. S. TALBOT,
BISHOP OF PRETORIA;

WILLIAM BROWN, M.D.,
WILDE READER IN MENTAL PHILOSOPHY;

AND

FR. W. H. FRERE,
MIRFIELD

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FOREWORD

THE answer to the question, What shall I do to inherit eternal life, is, according to our Lord, comprised in the simple injunction: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God and thy neighbour as thyself.' But the approach to such a life of practical service and devotion is made far easier to the ordinary man when certain preliminary questions in regard to the relation of Faith and Reason, and the nature of God, Man and Prayer, are cleared out of the way. The purpose of the addresses here printed, which form a connected series—delivered originally to undergraduates in Oxford, but likely, it is hoped, to appeal to a wider audience—is to suggest lines of thought which may be of use to that end. They deal not so much with Personal Religion in itself, as with the foundations on which it may be raised.

ERROR.

TITLE PAGE.—*After the Rev. W. Fearon Halliday, for Woodbrooke read The Associated Colleges, Selly Oak.*

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Faith and Reason

BY THE DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S.

THESE addresses are to deal with personal religion, which is a matter for us all. Some of you are students of philosophy, who may be interested in discussions about the place of the intellect, and of the will, in religious life. But I do not wish to talk about these problems to-day. My object is to explain, as far as I can, what Faith means, and what it must do for us. But first I wish to make some general remarks on the hindrances to the spiritual life with which most of us are too familiar.

The spiritual life means a life of communion with God, a life in which the soul has free access to God, and God to the soul. Most of us find this communion with God so difficult that we are sometimes tempted to doubt whether it is a genuine experience at all. Or if we do not put it so strongly as that, we have to admit that it is not real to us. When we speak of real life, we generally mean the world around us, all the things that we can see and hear and touch. The world of ideas, art, science, philosophy and religion, seems to us less real because it is intangible and invisible. Most men, during their working and playing hours, are chiefly concerned with concrete things. Even students are more occupied in loading their memories than in contemplating ideals. And so when we try to turn our thoughts to God, when we kneel to pray or endeavour to remember heavenly things at spare moments, we find it very difficult. Our minds do not work easily or naturally on these subjects. There is something forced and unreal about our meditation or devotion. We find that we are not really praying at all,

but only repeating words mechanically. And then comes the temptation to say, 'My religion is a sham, an unreality. I wonder if the religion of others is only make-believe too?'

Now I have one or two remarks to make about this. In the first place, it is quite natural and inevitable that if we spend sixteen hours daily of our waking life in thinking about the affairs of this world, and about five minutes in thinking about God and our souls, this world will seem about two hundred times more real to us than God or our souls. That must be so, however real and important the spiritual world may actually be. The fact that it seems unreal to us is no argument that it is unreal, if we hardly ever think about it. Things that we do not think about always seem unreal to us. Do not then argue that God is unreal because He seems unreal to you. Ask yourselves whether you have given Him, or rather yourselves, a fair chance.

Secondly, people are very differently constituted in their capacity for religious feeling. Some are religiously gifted, others are not. Some have what is called the mystical sense—the power of feeling the presence of God intensely and intimately; others have it not. Two mistakes are often made about this gift of devotion. Some think that it is a proof of goodness and holiness—that all those whose hearts are right with God have it, while those who are unregenerate have it not. Others think that it is all a delusion, a product of excited nerves and morbid imagination. Both are wrong. The gift of devotion is an endowment like a taste for music or poetry. In its highest form it is genius of a certain kind. The saints are our masters in the spiritual life. They have the same kind of authority in their own sphere that the great poets and musicians have in theirs. We sit at their feet and learn from them what we are able to assimilate. We do not think that music is all rubbish, because we happen to be unmusical, nor, like George III., that much of Shakespeare is 'sad stuff,' because we may happen to prefer a sensational novel. The great saints have been men of genius, no less

than Handel or Shakespeare. Why should we not trust them on their own subject ?

But it is almost as great a mistake to suppose that religiosity is a mark of the goodness which God values. Clergymen, I am afraid, often make this mistake, carried away by professional zeal ; but laymen know better. They know that the most unselfish, upright, kind-hearted men of their acquaintance are often not outwardly religious. At any rate, no one could call them saints or mystics. Now the right way to look at this is that the gift of devotion is a good and precious gift, which we ought to cultivate and be very thankful for if we have it, and a thing which we ought all to try to acquire ; but that it is not a measure of our acceptance with God. From what we read of the Twelve Apostles, I should gather that most of them were not religiously gifted men naturally. Our Lord chose them because they were true-hearted and generous men, men capable of making great sacrifices, brave and loyal men. If then you have this gift, do not be proud of it ; do not suppose that it will necessarily make you pure and honourable and unselfish. I regret to say that this is very far from being the case. And if you have it not, recognise frankly that it is a defect in your make-up, and that you must go to school humbly to the saints, in order to know what are the high and holy truths which God reveals, by His Spirit, to some men and women, whom He chooses to be the receivers and witnesses of these revelations. Do not disbelieve what they say because you cannot have these experiences yourselves, and do not think meanly of yourselves because God has not committed this special grace to you. Only, before you make up your minds that you are spiritually short-sighted, I repeat that you must give the Holy Spirit, or rather yourselves, a fair chance. You do not give Him, or yourselves, a fair chance unless you determine to perform frequently what are called acts of faith. I mean that we must force ourselves to direct our whole minds, our wills, our affections, our intellects, towards divine things. When we have a few minutes to

ourselves, alone, we should say to ourselves, 'Now I want to think about, and make real to myself, those great facts about the unseen eternal world which Christ has revealed to us, and which thousands of good men and women have seen and felt as plainly as I see and feel this table and chair in my room. Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief. Open Thou mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of Thy law. Thou hast said, O Lord, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. O make my heart pure, that I may see Thee.' You will find these exercises very difficult at first, and you will sometimes doubt whether they are doing you any good. But believe me, they will clear and open out channels in your minds which are now choked up from disuse; they will make it possible for the fresh springs of God's grace, the sweet influences of His Holy Spirit, to flow freely through your hearts. They will gradually form habits of spiritual communion, which will be an inestimable joy and help to you. Surely you may trust those who have tried it, when they all say the same thing. 'They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee, for Thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek Thee.'

But, perhaps, some may say, 'I am not sure that I ought to force my mind into this groove, even if it would make me happier to do so. I have serious doubts, and I think I ought to face them.' Certainly you ought to face them. While you only drive them away, you will never be free from them. But let me suggest this to you. Religious doubts, it seems to me, are of two kinds. Some doubts congregate upon some particular doctrine or dogma of religion. There is a skeleton in our spiritual cupboard which destroys our sense of security, our joy and peace in believing. We have, perhaps, read or listened to one of those misguided apologists whose favourite weapon is the dilemma. 'You tell me you don't believe so and so. Well, then, you can't believe this other thing either. And if you don't believe this other thing, your whole religion must go by the board. Take it or leave it; the whole stands or

falls together.' Well, that is a very unfair and a very calamitous way of arguing. I say to you, pull the skeleton out of the cupboard and have a good look at it. Ask yourself candidly, what does this doctrine prove, if it is true? And what necessarily goes with it, if it has to go? Is it part of my religion, or only a bit of scaffolding, or an outwork, or perhaps not even that, but something which I have vaguely supposed to be somehow connected with Christian belief? And why do I doubt it? Are my reasons good or bad? The result of this inquiry will sometimes be that you will recover your belief in this particular doctrine or dogma, but more often, perhaps, that you will find that it is, for you at any rate, unessential, not a religious difficulty at all. This will very probably be your conclusion if the difficulty is about some event in the distant past or in the distant future.

But if your doubt does not concern any particular doctrine, but comes over you as a general incredulity, a cold scepticism or indifference to the spiritual world as a whole, that is, in part at least, a moral disease to be combatted with moral weapons. If the whole of a distant landscape, which others have described to me, is a mere blur to my eyes, I infer either that there is a fog, which will pass away soon, or that there is something wrong with my vision. It is when we are troubled with this second kind of doubt that it becomes a pertinent and not an impertinent question, Have I done anything to injure my spiritual eyesight? Is there any reason why I cannot expect to see God? Am I sure that I want to see Him, and to know that He is looking at me? It will do us no harm to ask these questions, even though in some cases our hearts may not condemn us. Perhaps there is nothing wrong with our eyes. Perhaps it is only a fog sent for our discipline. If so, be patient, the clouds will roll by.

Some may object that the authority of the intellectual world seems to be against the Christian Faith, and that they have no wish to be stranded in an intellectual backwater. The answer to this is, that we are wise to trust an

expert on his own subject, and to follow him very warily when he goes off it. This cuts both ways. We have had a theological astronomy and cosmogony and biology and history, with which the Christian Faith has unfortunately become entangled. These are, of course, relics of obsolete science; they were not supposed to be unscientific when they were first accepted. If your faith is well grounded, take a bold line about these things. There is no obligation for Christians to live in a pre-Copernican or a pre-Darwinian universe. But we have also had a materialistic metaphysics and a determinist ethics, based on a very crude mechanical theory. You will not find that the ablest scientific men to-day are so ready to explain mind and spirit in terms of matter.

Give to science the things that belong to science, and to religion the things that belong to religion. I do not say that there are no difficulties; there are many. But trust the saints when they write or speak about God and the soul. And, above all, trust our Lord Jesus Christ when He tells us that God is our Father, Who loves and cares for us all. Our Blessed Lord at any rate convinced those who heard Him that He spoke with authority; and His testimony has been confirmed by all who have trusted in Him from that day to this. The disciple of Christ may sometimes hear objections to his faith which he cannot answer; but he will have the last word if, like the man whom Christ restored to sight, he can say, 'One thing I know, that whereas before I found Him I was blind, now I see.'

Let us now turn to the word Faith. The word rose in dignity between the time of Plato, who allied it with 'opinion,' and the Epistle to the Hebrews, where it is defined as the substance (or assurance) of things hoped for, the evidence (or test) of things not seen. I have not time to discuss the exact meaning of the two nouns used in this famous definition; but it is clear that the writer makes Faith in some sort an anticipation of knowledge, and a guarantee of it. In another verse of the same chapter it is

said to be 'a seeing of the invisible,' on which St. Augustine's comment is true and fine: '*Errabant quidem adhuc et patriam quaerebant; sed duce Christo errare non poterant. Via illis fuit visio Dei.*' The journey of Faith is the vision of God.

As for the apparent contradiction between St. Paul and St. James about Faith and Works, Julius Hare is worth quoting. 'Faith without works is the shadow of faith, not the substance. Why is this except that faith, if it be living, real, substantial, is a practical principle, a practical power; nay, of all powers and principles by which man can be actuated, the most practical, so that when it does not show forth its life by good works, we may reasonably conclude that it is dead, just as we infer that a body is dead when it has ceased to move, or a tree when it puts forth no leaves.' St. Paul would have fully accepted this.

In the Fourth Gospel, 'Faith' is not used: the Evangelist avoids the word for the same reason that he avoids 'knowledge' and 'wisdom.' These words had already become the shibboleths of parties in the Church. But the verb 'to believe' is common, and the two meanings of intellectual conviction and moral self-surrender are about equally emphasised. Dr. Abbott says truly, 'Believing (in this Gospel) is not a consummation or a goal, but a number of different stages, by which men pass towards the one Centre, in which they are to have life.'

Faith, you see, is a real venture, 'the resolution to stand or fall by the noblest hypothesis.' But though it begins as an experiment, it ends as an experience. *Solvitur ambulando.*

What is essential is that we should make the venture, keeping nothing back. The Stoic poet Manilius, who is so little read even by classical scholars, has two noble lines which are thoroughly Christian:—

*'Quid caelo dabimus? Quantum est quo veneat omne?
Impendendus homo est, Deus esse ut possit in ipso.'*

'A man must stake himself.' Huxley is quoted as saying: 'It does not take much of a man to be a Christian;

but it takes all there is of him.' This sounds a little disparaging; but perhaps a man who puts 'all there is of him' into the greatest of all ventures is already a good deal of a man, and in the way to become more.

Of the early Church Fathers, we find already in Ignatius the fundamental Christian teaching that 'Faith is the beginning, Love the end.' And in the Clementine Recognitions there is a bold emphasis on the necessity of 'adding to our faith knowledge.' 'He who has received truths fortified by reason can never lose them, whereas he who receives them without proofs, by simple assent, can neither keep them safely nor be sure that they are true.'

But it is in Clement of Alexandria that we find the Christian conception of faith expounded most fully and most beautifully. 'Faith, which the Greeks despise as futile and barbarous, is a voluntary anticipation, the assent of piety, the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, as the Apostle says. Others have defined faith as an uniting assent to an unseen object. And since choice is the beginning of action, faith is the beginning of action, being the foundation of rational choice, when a man sets before himself through faith the demonstration which he anticipates. Voluntarily to follow what is good is the beginning of understanding it. Unswerving choice, therefore, gives a great stimulus to knowledge. The exercise of faith becomes knowledge built on a sure foundation.'

'We can learn nothing without a preconceived idea of what we are aiming at; faith is such a preconception. This is what the prophet meant by 'Unless ye believe ye will not understand,' or, as Heracleitus says, 'If you do not hope, you will not find what is beyond your hopes.'

'Faith is the first movement towards salvation, after which fear and hope and repentance, in company with temperance and patience, lead on to love and knowledge.'

'Fear is the beginning of love. Fear develops into faith, and faith into love. But I do not fear my Father as I fear a wild beast; I fear and love Him at once. Blessed is he who has faith, which is compounded of love and fear.'

‘Faith,’ he says again, ‘is compendious knowledge, and knowledge is reasoned faith.’ ‘Knowledge therefore is faithful, and faith is knowable.’

At the time and place in which Clement wrote, Alexandria, at the beginning of the third century, faith and reason seemed to walk hand in hand. It was a happy time for Christian thinkers, like the great age of the Schoolmen. Now, on the other hand, we have deep problems to solve, and there are large readjustments to make. A strong faith accepts the task reverently and cheerfully; a weak faith hides behind tradition and tries to silence inquiry by authority. The future, do not doubt it, is with the strong faith.

There has always been a tendency among theologians to regard faith as an act of violence exercised by the will upon the intellect. The schoolboy who defined faith as ‘believing what you know to be untrue’ was only parodying the teaching which is sometimes given. Even Father Tyrrell says: ‘There is a sense of unreality, one might almost say of pretence, about these freely chosen beliefs. We hold to the belief in obedience to the command of God. But this will not prevent that seeming black to us which God tells us to be white. A certain sense of unreality is part of the trial of faith. The great mass of our beliefs are reversible, and are dependent for their stability on the action or permission of the will.’ This language is shocking to me. It implies a purely external revelation, commanding us in so many words to say that black is white. Faith cannot rest on bare authority. If a man or an institution tells me that it has been revealed by God that something is true, I must have another revelation before I can tell whether I ought to believe that a revelation has been made. This is not at all like the venture of faith of which I spoke just now.

Faith does not compel us to say that black is white. Its objects are not in the phenomenal world, but among the unseen things which are eternal.

Certain states of mind are incompatible with faith. The

dull and stupid temper; the pessimistic temper; the sceptical temper; the ironical indifferent temper; the peevish and rebellious temper which Chaucer calls 'the rotten sin of accidie'; the selfish and loveless temper, are all barriers against faith. If we are too stupid to ask for any meaning in our experience, too frivolous to care for what can only be cared for seriously, too self-absorbed to be interested in anything that does not concern our petty affairs, too gloomy to hope, or too wilful to learn, we are labouring under fatal disqualifications for the life of faith.

What distinguishes faith from empirical knowledge is the recognition of an objective, independent, eternal standard of values, not given in our present experience, but by which all experience is to be judged. We may hope for a progressive verification of the judgments of faith as we advance in the spiritual life, just as, when we are climbing a mountain, we see more of the country the higher we mount. But the verification is never complete in this world; we could not expect it.

We had better not ask, What is the organ of faith? The question smacks of the old discredited faculty-psychology, and it cannot be answered, because faith is an activity of the whole man. I mention this controversy only because some have identified faith with 'pure feeling.' There is no such thing as pure feeling, in which the will and intellect have no part; and the over-emphasis on emotional states leads to the wrong kind of mysticism. The spurious mystic craves for short cuts to communion with God; he thinks that he has reached the end of his journey when he has hardly begun it. Emotional, even hysterical religion is emphatically not what we wish to encourage. Think how absolutely alien the character and teaching of Christ were to this kind of piety. 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me.'

Spiritual 'consolations' are sometimes sent by God to beginners. All the great spiritual guides warn us not to make much of them, nor to be troubled when they are withdrawn, as they probably will be. We are not to

expect to *enjoy* God until our probation is over ; if we are now and then ' with Christ on the holy mount,' the vision is meant to nerve us for some special task. All methods of stimulating religious emotion must be used sparingly, if at all. They draw off the vigour of the will and sometimes blunt the conscience. Religion was not meant to be an anodyne. We must face the difficulties and troubles of life squarely and with open eyes. Remember the words which Augustine heard Christ saying to him : ' I am the food of the full-grown ; be a man, and thou shalt feed upon me.'

It is a difficult question whether rationalism, *i.e.* positive knowledge, has much place in the life of faith, except as checking the exuberance of the religious imagination. The study of nature in all its branches is of course a revelation of the nature and character of God under one at least of His supreme attributes, and I have myself no doubt that philosophy gives us a sound basis for a spiritual interpretation of reality. But how far can we agree with the official Roman Catholic apologetic that the existence of God may be demonstrated by the unaided light of human reason ? The Vatican Council of 1870 pronounced that ' Si quis dixerit Deum unum et verum naturali rationis lumine certo cognosci non posse, anathema sit.' All depends on what we mean by the natural light of reason, and on what we mean by God. The sharp distinction between natural and supernatural is characteristic of Roman Catholicism ; thinkers who are not Roman Catholics have generally repudiated it. I can find no room for it in my own creed. And I think myself that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ can be ' certainly known ' only as the reward of a life of faith and discipline. The famous four proofs of God's existence are not valueless ; in spite of Kant they may be stated in a very cogent form. But they do not establish the existence of the God of Christianity. It is not the logical faculty, but the ' spirit in love ' which finds in experience the God whom Christ came to reveal. ' He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' If we like

to call the beatific vision 'the natural light of reason,' I do not object, believing that our nature is '*capax deitatis*'; but one would like to know who are the opponents whom the Vatican Council wished to anathematise.

Rationalism, you observe, is as often orthodox as heretical. The so-called proofs from miracle and prophecy are rationalistic. Their main weakness is that if the facts could be substantiated, they would prove nothing which has any value for religion. Occasional interferences with the laws of nature would be very disturbing for science, but they would not help faith at all. There is an odd notion that the exceptional is the important. If the exceptional tests (not 'proves') a rule, it must be taken into account; if it merely breaks a rule, it is of no importance for those who have to live under the rule. We need not trouble ourselves about the course of a comet which, after crossing our system once, has vanished into space.

St. Paul's words about faith and reason are worth pondering over. 'My speech and preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet a wisdom not of this world . . . but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the world unto our glory.' Spiritual wisdom, you see, is unchanging and eternal; it is communicated to us 'in types and shadows dim,' until we grow up into the power of apprehending it. Those who are 'perfect'—full-grown—can understand it. This wisdom is something very different from the dry rationalism, whether orthodox or deistic, of the eighteenth century. The writers of this period, on both sides of the controversy, had forgotten the meaning of faith. They wanted to prove faith, not experimentally but logically. This is just what cannot be done. They wanted to find a place for God in their scheme. But God is too big to be fitted into a frame. He is not one of the factors for which science has to account.

The Vatican Council seems to declare that atheism is unthinkable or illogical. I do not think it is this; it is only 'absurd,' in Lotze's sense of the word. It is absurd, because it reduces the world to a chaos, a malignant trick, or a sorry joke. But we cannot get on in any science or any art or any serious pursuit without postulating that the world is none of these things. It has been said that in every philosophy a point is reached where a man must trust himself. This is to admit that even in purely secular studies and enterprises we must perform an act of faith. How this works in natural science we may illustrate from the following words of Professor Huxley: 'Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, to follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses nature leads you, or you shall learn nothing.' I do not know whether the Professor realised what a great act of faith he was performing in affirming this principle. The man of science has faith that the real is rational, and sits down like a little child to find out by experiment all that this means. The religious man has faith that the real is spiritual, and sits down like a little child to find out all that this means. In both cases wisdom is justified of her children.

“The Father”

BY PROFESSOR CAIRNS.

HOW are we to think of God? That is really the deepest question that any human being can ever ask. It depends on a man's idea of God what kind of character he will develop. Inevitably the right idea of God shapes and moulds the whole of life for good, and if the idea of God is wrong, it has precisely the same comprehensive and steady effect for evil upon human character. And this applies to societies and nations as well as to human beings. There is a great saying in Hegel's 'Philosophy of Religion': 'The nation which has an evil conception of God has also a bad state, a bad government, and bad laws.' I do not think I am pressing the matter too far when I say that this is the radical cause of the condition of Europe to-day. Something comprehensive has gone wrong with man's idea of God; and you will never put Christendom right until you have that idea changed. Further, it inevitably follows that it is part of a noble life to be ever seeking for better, truer ideas of God. I wish to look a little into the history and growth of the idea of God by way of leading up to my real subject to-night—the Christian idea of God the Father.

In all ages and all lands you find religion, and wherever you get a religion you get a conception of the gods as powerful, and it is the radical conception. The god must be able to help you, otherwise man argues he is not worth believing in or worth praying to. So we really tamper with something very fundamental and vital whenever we go over to any conception of a limited god. In all these earlier stages of religion you find an interesting variety of Pantheons and modes of worshipping the gods of these

Pantheons. It is a rather remarkable fact that in none of them, with the possible exception of the Persian religion, do you find any devil, the reason being that, as someone has caustically said, the function of the devil was so efficiently discharged by some one or other of the gods, that there was no place for him. That shows us the real weakness of all the earlier religions. They had their place, interest, and power, but they could not live and send humanity forward on progressive paths until the great step was taken which will ever make the fame of the Hebrew race immortal. And that was the identifying of this stupendous power over all things with the power that revealed himself in the conscience and in the soul. Wherever you get humanity you get ethical ideals, and there is some kind or other of haunting insistent thing within you that tells you there is a higher course, a thing that makes a man human—the moral ideal. The Hebrews took the great step of identifying the stupendous Power over all things with the Power that revealed Himself in the conscience and the soul. They moralised the idea of God, and the immediate effect was to unify the Pantheon.

Polytheism disappears the moment you take this great step. For the moral idea in its very nature is intolerant of rivals. There is only one Highest. And so the Hebrew race broke out of all these entangling polytheisms, and they created the greatest monotheism in history. With the single exception of Indian theism, practically all the theisms of the world to-day depend on the Hebrew discovery. It at once made the world a great orderly place, at once made religion something capable of lifting and carrying whole generations; it at once delivered men from the feeling that the powers behind all things were dark powers, and it gave all the noblest natures an amazing sense of relief and expansion, which accounts for the delight and joy of the spacious magnificent morality of Hebrew prophecy.

The coming of Jesus Christ transformed the whole idea of God. He came into that great inheritance, and took it, as it were, all over. Christianity is a monotheism. He

took it all over and carried it a long way farther by His revelation of God as Father. The Hebrews had prepared the way for that, for the moment you begin to speak of the great Power over all things as being one with our ideas of goodness and beauty, you humanise the whole universe, you carry human values behind nature, you set these great ideal things on the throne of the world, you assert in principle your kinship with Almighty God. Jesus Christ carried all that farther with His revelation of God as Father. How did He reveal God as Father? What did He mean by it? He meant by it first that the likeliest thing in all the universe to the great Being Who is behind and over all things is found in the life of the human family. He said the likeliest thing to God in all the world was the relationship between the child and its father or mother. And He set that standing in history. We find He brings out this thought in two ways. He does it first by teaching. He takes for instance the story of the prodigal. He is asked in effect: Do you really mean to say all human beings, not only the righteous but the sinful, the outcasts, are sons of God? And He explicitly answers it by the parable. This is His picture of God—the Father waiting for the return of the Son. You may universalise it, and say the Father in Heaven is waiting for the return of the wandering human race, or take it individually as the story of countless individuals. What He is seeking to do is to show the nature of the Father. And over and over again you find Him teaching the same thing less explicitly.

The point I want particularly to make is that this is only a part of Jesus Christ's revelation of the future. He puts His whole personality into the revelation, so that you cannot understand and believe and love Jesus Christ without being drawn on inevitably to the confession of God as the Father. He comes up from His home in Nazareth, and there He stands on the eve of His mission. He has only three years to change the world's conception of God, and only His own body and soul as His instruments; and in three years He changes the conception of God by His life,

His death, His resurrection, and then by the coming of the Spirit.

What do I mean by saying that He puts His personality into it? His whole life is centred in this faith in God as His Father. He takes that great idea and lives the kind of life that is in absolute harmony with it. It is a life that at every point is dependent upon, rests upon, draws its strength from a love for the Father. It is the life of an ideal Son. When He was lost as a child in the great city, and went to the Temple, His parents came to Him and said: 'Why have you treated us thus, why have you come here?' That in effect is the drift of the question. 'Where else should I go,' He asks, 'than to my Father's house?' It is a glimpse into the Boy's very soul. The most homelike place in Jerusalem was the Father's house. And then eighteen years later, at the baptism, we are told a voice from Heaven described Him: 'This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.' And all the way through you find Him living this life of an ideal Son, never failing the Father at any point. So that the more you penetrate to the spirit and genius of Jesus, the more you get new light on Him, the more are you compelled, in order to understand Him, to think of the Father in Heaven. And this is altogether away from and apart from anything dogmatic or theological.

It is a happy part of history that once in its long course there appeared a Man who lived the life of a perfect Son. Look a little further into it. He lived the life of perfect faith. We all in a sense carry the burdens of our own lives. We think of all we might gain or lose. This is human and natural. We have a career to make, a life to live. Jesus flung all these personal interests on His Father. He had faith that He might throw them all on God, that God would care for Him far better than He could care for Himself, and in that way, being relieved of all that personal care and anxiety, His spirit was set free to live for truth and love and duty and honour. This is what I mean by a filial life, the life of one who, being liberated by

faith in the presence and love and care of the Father from every narrow personal interest and care, is able to think and live for the great ideal things. This is what I mean by a filial life, and it draws its inspiration from this absolute confidence in the great Being behind Him. That is religion. You cannot understand the Christian ethic until you understand the religious conviction that is behind it and that makes it supremely rational. For if Jesus Christ were right here, if the ultimate nature of things is as He said, then the only rational kind of life is the life that gives itself away in the search for the ideal and the service of one's fellow men.

Out of this absolute trust in God and this spirit set free, there springs the purest love for humanity. What was the ground of Christ's love for men? I believe it was just because they were the likeliest things in all the world to God. There was the Divine in them, and it is this that He loves and seeks to liberate and ennoble. He is at home with men because He is at home with God; and it is this rooted faith of Jesus in the soul of man, the soul of humanity, that is the secret of His enthusiasm for humanity and of His love for man. It all hangs together, it is all one coherent and massive whole—the teaching of Jesus. In this way we see the reason of His love for men. He lived this kind of life out to the very uttermost with a decisiveness and thoroughness that were unqualified, until at last He made the supreme experiment, gave away everything, gave away His life. The Crucifixion is an act of faith in God, and it is the supreme revelation also of the value He set upon man—the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

Again, I am not for one moment leaving the solid ground of history. Is there anything more reassuring in history than the facts I have put before you? The thing I feel most mysterious in history, next to the fact of moral evil, is the instability of the most sacred things in the human heart in the presence of the tremendous destroying powers of nature and time. Why should God have made so sacred the things of human life, and then, having made

so divine a thing, have put it at the mercy of the great brute forces of the world? In other ways you can put the same riddle. But here you have Jesus Christ with the most unbounded confidence in the Heavenly Father, and at the same time the One Who has taught us all humanity. He has taught the human race humanity, has felt its sorrows, has taken them home to His heart, and knows what the mystery of human life is. There is nothing hard about Him as there is about so many defenders of God. And yet this One knows and feels all that doubt and sorrow of mankind about life and death, and full of the most absolute confidence, trusts and delights in the great Fatherhood. This is the most reassuring fact in human history—the faith of Jesus in God.

Teaching like this about God as the Father is so inexpressibly simple that any little child can understand it; but it is extraordinarily profound. I want very briefly to show you if you once accept this view of Christ about God and man, how rich an account it gives you of human life, how rich an inspiration of the soul. First, it asserts our kinship with God, that there is the Divine in every human being, and that this is the deepest thing. If we could persuade humanity of that to-day! Think of the complete change that would come over everything, if instead of looking upon man as a chained tiger, you look upon him as an imprisoned spirit. If you are going to look upon man as a chained tiger—a totally depraved creature, you are inevitably led in the end to work out to absolutism, political tyranny. The more you chain him, whip him, drive him, the better, you say, for him; but it is the line of absolutism. If, on the other hand, man has a soul at bottom and that is the deepest thing about him, then you have the spiritual basis for liberty, freedom for all that we know to be most full of the spirit of progress. And behind it all there is this conception of the sacredness of humanity. You cannot have too great a sense of it. It means the sweetening and humanising of all relations. The thing above all things that the world needs to-day is a better

sense of the sacredness of man. There has been far too little love in the world; and it is working death. This thought of the sacredness of man has been the Christian leaven in civilisation all the way down, and it is only another way of asserting the Fatherhood of God. We speak of the brotherhood of man. Think how it changes your whole ideas of education—that education is really the bringing out of the deepest and richest in us, that man is an imprisoned spirit. But if he is a chained tiger, the less you talk about bringing out what is in him the better. If God is the Father of us all, you have a spacious and satisfying account of nature, history, and human life. The world is not a vale of tears, said Keats, it is the place of soul-making, the bringing into being of sons and daughters, the training of sons and daughters, the bringing out of the Divine in them. This principle lies behind all the best of our modern idealism—it came into it through religion. You get it put in philosophical form, but it is all there in principle in essential Christianity. You have here the one account of human life that really solves the riddle of the nature of man. The riddle of the world is explained. And then think of the help and encouragement it gives in the moral struggle. It is true we are children of natural heredity. We carry with us the vestiges of our past. You know all that is talked about heredity to-day. It is all true, but there is a deeper truth. We inherit from God. There is the Divine heredity as well as the natural heredity. In you and me there are deep tendencies and strains, not only to call us back but to send us forward up and out into the light, and to search for truth, beauty, and goodness, and the face of our Father in heaven.

And then involved in this teaching about the Divine Fatherhood there arises inevitably the belief in the life to come. It is utterly incredible that if God be the Divine Father, Who has brought into being this amazing child of His—man—He should allow His children to drop away into nothingness again! It is unthinkable for anyone who has taken home to himself the faith in the Fatherhood of

God. And so we are led on to the last thought. This is that surely in the light of this Divine Fatherhood, there comes a new sacredness into everything truly human. Take the life of a human family. You can trace it back in history; you can see how the family came to be, and show its evolution; and then you can tell the history of the family once it has come into being. That is the explanation from the past. But that does not explain it all if God is the Divine Father. The real meaning of the family can only be known when history is over, and when we have entered the great family—the Father's home. You cannot explain anything unless you look at the future as well as the past, and I cannot help feeling that we never understand human life, human affections and duty, unless we understand it as an anticipation of the real thing that is coming when its ideal will at last be realised. I cherish the hope that when for all of us the long day's work is done and we go home and look upon the face of our Father in heaven, there will be no strangeness about it. There will be wonder and awe, but we shall realise He was there all the time, and there will be something in it that will recall all the dear and sacred human experience that we have ever had. We shall realise He was there in our family relationships, our family ties, our friendships, our education, in every lovely thing in earth and nature and the ocean. And all this will be seen, everything, as it were, recalled, when we know even as we are known; we will understand that all life has been one great sacrament—the Divine things revealing themselves through human affection and human duties—that we have to eat the bread and drink the wine of the great sacrament of human life if we are really ever to observe the full glory of God. And that seems to me involved in this consecration by Christ of the life of the family in His name—God as Father.

I have not nearly finished all I would like to say on this great theme. In all I have been saying I have tried to prepare the way for my friends who will follow, and who will show you that filial life that was lived with such

perfection and beauty in the Man of Nazareth, and how the secret of it can be learnt from Him, and the power of love be won from Him. But the one thing on which I wish to close to-night is this: the great problem for every man and woman among us is to get into that personal relation with the Father, so that you are able to throw all your personal care on Him; knowing you will be far better cared for by Him who made you and redeemed you, than by your own cunning, wisdom, and bravery. If we can once learn to make that great act of trust in God—and it is a thing we all with difficulty learn—the whole of conduct is set in a new light—the heart, set free through faith from care, is able in a new way to live the life of love, service, and prayer. The one life is the life of self-seeking, and the other is the life of the Christian religion; and the transition from the one to the other is the transition from death to life. The thing that is wanted by Europe, by humanity, to-day is that faith in the living God which will kill selfishness and, perhaps the darkest enemy of all, fear—sheer cold fear.

Only faith in God will kill fear. Fear is the mark of the beast in man, woman and nation. The only way of escape from it is not simply to suppress it, and so, as the psychologists tell us, create a new complex, but it is by believing in the living God. It is because I see in Christ with ever greater clearness the figure that stands for faith, for sonship, and love, that for me He leads the generations still. When a man comes to Christ he is emancipated, set free, because Jesus Christ is always in advance of us. He is always in advance of us because He is the ideal Son of God.

Man's Need

BY THE REV. W. FEARON HALLIDAY.

YOU will remember that last night Dr. Cairns dwelt on Jesus Christ as the perfect Son of God. And as we see what He is as the Son, we realise what the Father is and must be. The fact that He gained the victory over the world is the proof that the Father was with Him—that the Father was a living God. He could not possibly have lived as He did and gained the victory He gained unless He was dealing with what was real, and founding His life upon what was fact. And so you come to Jesus Christ as the only man who ever lived who was really adequate to life. He was adequate to life because He had a right relation to God and man. He sums it up 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . and thy neighbour as thyself.' And our miseries and distresses come because we are not like Him—in soul, in our attitude to God or man. We have a wrong relation to God and to man, and that wrong relationship, which issues in wrong action, is evil, which is a wider term than sin. My subject chiefly concerns sin. I know that sin is a very unpopular word. We are quite prepared in a crowd to confess ourselves miserable sinners, but woe be to the man who tells us to our faces we have done wrong. And yet we cannot get away from it. We know in our souls we are wrong. How are we to define this wrong? It involves a wrong relation to God and to our brethren. What is it in our souls that makes us unwilling to have a right relationship to God and other people? Two things—self centredness, and insincerity. You will find that modern medical psychology regards these as two primal evils, just as religion does. For a man or woman to have their interests turned in upon

themselves and not out upon others, is to have a man or woman who is not likely to be healthy for long. And when the psychologist finds a man is insincere—that, seeing the facts, he will not face them, he shows him the door—there is nothing more to be done. These are two great facts, and they are the causes of our sin.

Take self-centredness. I am not for a moment denying the rights of a man. I do not want to enter into a discussion about egoism and altruism. I simply want to say that when anyone consciously lives for his own isolated self, with interests only for himself, that is sin; it is unethical, anti-social, it is irreligion—not only that, it is folly. There are many ways in which we live for ourselves—higher and lower ways. Some live lives of selfish pleasure. What a miserable thing it is! We may be thankful that to-day we can talk more plainly than we used about the sin that grips individuals and society; there is no greater curse than the sin of sensuality. No one can truly argue that pleasure is wrong, but it is wrong when it interferes with the rights of other people. We sometimes have our lighter pleasures at the expense of other people. What can be said of those gross forms of pleasure that trample on what is sacred in human life, that use others as a means to an end, and do not mind pushing them to destruction; of those excuses which men make for those things which are idle and vain, and which we know in our own souls to be so? It is the sin that not only destroys the inward life, but the man's and woman's future. The man who blots out his own hearth with that sin can never light the fire again save by a miracle of God's grace. Memory and association all come back to taint his pleasure, even though he strives to recover of himself.

We have to face facts, and here we are up against a real fact. It is ultimately the fact of the sacredness of human life and human affection. I remember one night a man came into my study. I handed him a cigarette and he twiddled with it. I saw he was in trouble, and I said, 'What's the matter?' He said, 'I have wronged the

girl I am engaged to.' Knowing he had come from a good home, I said, 'What does your father think of it?' He replied, 'Father was digging in the garden when I told him; he leaned heavily on his spade and looked at me. He never spoke; his heart was broken. I am in hell.' That is the way our best nature judges sin. Something is in us crying out against it and against ourselves. Let me ask anybody: What right have we to live at the expense of other people, and to regard other people as a means to an end?

There are more refined forms of self-centredness, but I am not going to differentiate in quality between sins. We find sometimes people who are self-controlled, very respectable, and yet utterly selfish. They are living life as if it were their own game, and other people are just counters in that game. There are many people who have little love for their old home, and little affection for their parents. Their aim is what they can get. They never look at the sacrifice and love that lies behind, and thoughtlessly often break the hearts of those who love them best. This very common sin comes from selfish self-centredness. Some people choose their friends because they are of use or merely pleasant to them; but as soon as they are no use, they turn them adrift. We have all seen that kind of thing, perhaps some of you have experienced it, and the root of it is that these people go out into life determined to get things from it, and with never a thought of giving something to it. A great many of you have no doubt come to Oxford desiring success. That is not in itself wrong. But do you realise the privilege of coming up here, and are you really seeking to prepare yourselves to be of use in the world to other people?

Here we are in a burdened, struggling world, with problems needing solution, men and women needing fellowship. Have you come up to make use of these great opportunities to do what you can to solve this problem, or simply to get a good class in order to get a good post, or with a burning ambition to be top, with very little interest in the subject

you are to be top in ? There are people like that, absolutely hollow, taking up everything as a means to their own elevation above their fellows. At my own varsity there was one man who took every prize he went in for. He stayed up for years in order to take prizes, and he had no interest in life save that of being top. One day we were arguing about immortality. He was an agnostic—he was his own god. As he was going out of the room he said, ‘I don’t want immortality; it would be the greatest curse God could give me. I am sick of life.’ Of course he was. The only real proof of immortality is to find such a real value in life that you cannot imagine it extinguished. And you never find that apart from loving and serving your fellows. Selfishness at last finds its own grave. He was perfectly logical. That kind of life was not worth living. Some people I know turn to us religious people and say, ‘You are selfish, you are out to save your own skins.’ That may be the idea of some people; but it has nothing to do with real religion. No man or woman knows anything about real religion who has not learnt to love God and their fellow men. No man who is really resting in what is called religion worries much about his own salvation; but he cares a good deal about the salvation of other people and about doing the will of God. He knows he can trust God who is good and true, if he seeks honestly to do His will as he knows it.

Some people are kept from church because some of their friends would laugh at them for going. Some people are kept from religion because they are afraid of what it would involve if they faced up to it. There is no doubt that facing up to it would turn us away from our selfishness; but it would not interfere with our freedom. The only thing real religion does is to take away what really hinders our freedom.

Now there is another form of self-centredness very common and very deadly. It is a form of bias. A determination to see what we want to see rather than what is. It is very easy to see what we want to see. The intellect is a

sophist. Like a lawyer with a brief, the brief is what we want to see. We can give grand reasons for what we wish. But no one will ever think aright unless the heart is right. For biased results are in the end only partially right or wholly wrong. What would you think of the scientist who was biased in his science? You would assert that his mental attitude was unworthy of his subject. What of a philosopher bringing personal bias to his study of philosophy? His system cannot be a solution of the problems of life. But it is just the same in religion. Real religion is laid on the foundation of lack of bias. That seems strange; but false religion has been the foe of real religion, and biased religion has been the foe of truth. We live in a universe the order of which is truth and love. We have to have pure hearts and unbiased minds, if the real values of life are to be revealed to us.

Our bias, selfishness, partialities really keep us from the truth. We project our prejudices upon reality, instead of being open to it.

Look at the biases we have—town, country, college, games, political, religious, theological, and so on. Our lives are roped round with our prejudices. But this, when we are conscious of it, is sin. And it is the deadliest kind of sin when our bias is personal, when we are biased in favour of ourselves and against other people. You know the man or woman who has a friend, and when there is some trouble, some row about something, they at once go to that friend to back them up, right or wrong, and think he is no friend unless he does. It is contemptible. It is a gross sin. Just think of what bias is doing to-day. Think of France and Germany and the Ruhr. Age-long bias: it works and grows; it won't see facts. The French do not see the German homes; the Germans do not see the French homes. The thing works up, and the world is in a miserable state as the outcome of this iniquity—bias. The biases of pride and passion and self-centredness are at the heart of insincerity, and insincerity is the real root of sin. If you read the Gospels you will find our Lord includes all sin

under this one category of insincerity. He has far more hope for the publican and harlot entering the kingdom of God than for the Pharisee, because the Pharisee is an actor—he is insincere. There is no hope for the insincere man—he won't face the facts. He turns from them. There is nothing to be done. It is hopeless as long as he is insincere. But this world would not be built on a basis of truth and righteousness if the insincere man won in the end. He may win in outward prosperity—he may deceive other people, but the one he cannot deceive on earth is himself, and in heaven, God. We have always to live with ourselves and in the presence of God. The insincere man always loses in the end—he loses his own soul.

You find some people trying to get rid of sin in insincere ways. I had a remarkable instance some time ago, when a man was sent me who was very broken from nervous conflict. He came into my study, and after a time I found he had committed a grave sin some time before. I said, 'Well, you are a professing Christian man; did you go to God for forgiveness?' 'Oh, yes,' he said, 'but I never got it.' I said 'Do you mean by forgiveness that God would bury the whole thing, there was to be no more about it, and you would get off scot free?' He said, 'Yes.' I said, 'Don't you see that's insincerity? By your sins you create a certain situation, you act in a certain way to certain people—you wrong them. You have to be prepared to face that—to be ruined, if necessary, to put it right and to be right, and God will give you forgiveness on that basis of sincerely dealing with your own life and the circumstances you have created.' Was there any other way out? At last he gave in, and we saw what was to be done, and he went away. I got word from a doctor afterward saying 'The man was going into an asylum. I had done everything I could, given him all the medicine I could, had ordered him a rest cure, I even tried hypnotism. What did you do?' I said, 'It was only a case of real conversion, and the entry into real religion.'

My point in giving that illustration is that nature works

with sincerity, and that it gave that man back his sanity. And when we grip religion as being in the very nature of things and in our nature, we won't think it is some hole-and-corner thing for the weaker section of the community.

None of us will deny that sin is a great power. There is an old saying that 'repeated sins impair the judgment, and he whose judgment is impaired sins repeatedly.' Huxley tells the story of an old reservist carrying a dinner through a London street. An old army comrade on the other side of the street saw him, and knowing what a thorough soldier he was, yelled, 'Attention!' His arms dropped. The dinner was in the street! That is habit. And when you make a habit of iniquity, it is easy to go down. Habits are strange things, and they work both ways, for good and evil. Many people will tell you about evil habits 'I cannot give up the habit, it is too strong for me.' We are dealing with something real and terrible. But it is no good to make excuses. That is not the way out. That is asking for sympathy in one's weakness, and sympathy with one's weakness makes one weaker still. That won't do. I am not saying we should blame people for their temptations if they have not caused them; it is fatal to crush them with blame if they have. We are up against a big problem—men and women enslaved by sin; and the worst of it is that when they become conscious of the slavery they fear the thing that enslaves them, and the more they fear the thing that enslaves them, the less power they have against it, and they get weaker and weaker. We have seen people struggling desperately in that way. And the question about the Gospel is: Is it really good news coming from God which will apply to such conditions? Is there a power that can alter me, something that liberates? That is the Gospel we are here to preach, and we say it quite as confidently as ever it was said, He is able to save to the uttermost all who come to Him through Christ.

And here I want to bring you to the answer. We have all got to come to it quite simply. If self-centredness and insincerity are the root of our trouble, how are we going to

get rid of them? It is not an easy problem to say to a man: You are too fond of yourself and your interests. The solution can only come when our wills and affections are unified; when our affections are set upon an object that is worthy of them, and that compels them. And that leads us to Jesus Christ. And we, like the Apostle Paul, may say: 'Oh, wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Do not let us take Christ merely as a shibboleth or a name. We have to understand Him, to look at Him, to learn of Him. Think how unselfish He was. He had the single eye, and His whole body was full of light. Think of how He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich. There you have real unselfishness. He had the love that never failed. He saw what we were doing—destroying ourselves—and He could not rest until this was altered.

Think of Him towards the close. See Him before Pilate. If you read between the lines, you will find that He tries to save Pilate. Read the whole narrative. There is no self-centredness, no self-pity. On the way to the Cross He sees the women weeping. 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for your children.' On the cross He thinks of His mother, of the dying thief, of the mean wretches who were His murderers. He realised their condition, the awfulness of the fact that they were blotting out hope and God from their lives. He realised that their bitterness and malice was their curse, and realising it, He was in agony because of them. 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.' Is it not clear that here we have perfectly manifested a right relation to God manifested in a selfless love for us?

Ah, but you say, that was twenty centuries ago. It was; but that same Jesus rules. He died seeking us, and when He rose, He sought us. 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.' He is the same yesterday, to-day, yea, and for ever; and, quite frankly, I would feel I had no Gospel if I did not believe that God

in Jesus Christ was living, personal, present. There is nothing that can save us from ourselves, save when we can say like the Apostle : ' He loved me and gave Himself for me.'

Now I fancy some of you are saying : What about the sins I have done ? They burden my memory, weigh on my heart. I never can make good. The first thing I have to say is, that God does not mind what we have done if only we are sincere. It is we that God thinks of, and not merely our actions; and if our faces are turned the right way, and if we seek to do His will and respond to His love in Jesus Christ, He will make us what He purposes us to be. God doesn't judge as we judge. He doesn't think of the past, He thinks of what we may become. But, on the other hand, the very tragedies we may have created, the very difficulties and entanglements into which we have got ourselves, can be and will be, if we are sincere and true, the greatest means of strength to us. To stand up quite simply before God and face one's situation in His presence, is to learn the lessons which that situation would teach. There is no real man who is out for anything that is real who would not thank God for this more than anything else—that God comes to him in Jesus Christ to help him to put the things right that are wrong. What does that mean ? To do right by those we have wronged, to stand for fellowship and love and truth. Once one does that, the benediction of God is in one's heart, and the joy of the Lord is one's strength.

Christ

BY THE BISHOP OF PRETORIA.*

I AM going to take your mind back first to Dean Inge. He told us that faith was the resolution to stand or fall by the noblest hypothesis we can make of the reality of truth and love. And Dr. Cairns gave us a glimpse of the faith of Jesus acting out such a resolution, Jesus banking all upon the reality of the Father, standing or falling by the noblest hypothesis as to the reality of truth and love. He gave us a wonderful picture, which you must get for yourselves, of Jesus living the perfectly filial life, dominated by the one reality that He called Father, living with the freedom and the power of having committed His whole life to the Father, and living in this world as a fatherly world, a fatherly order of existence, with its laws flowing from the Fatherhood, its laws for understanding that human life is to be based on what you might roughly call the family foundation—the perfectly filial life lived by Jesus. And last night we were brought, I might almost say with a bump, down to ourselves—our own need, the problem of self in its various forms, and the insincerity that will not face up to the reality of things.

To-night we come to Christ. And first I want to say that we are not merely coming to Jesus, to Jesus the man, the hero, the exemplar, who as man with man lived the human life. We are not just coming to Jesus, but I want to say in passing what a tremendous value there is in seeing Jesus as man and brother. That, I think, is the great constructive result of modern criticism. We can see the man again, the man whom doctrine and devotional exercises had hidden. There has been a disentanglement of the manhood of Jesus. He has been buried—partly by use, partly by hymns, partly by the infirmities of the devotional mind—

* It has unfortunately not been possible to submit the shorthand notes of this address to the Bishop for correction. It is felt, however, that any minor inaccuracies will not interfere with the impression of power and of deep personal conviction made on those who heard him.

so that the realities of His manhood have been obscured. You have the chance, you must do it for yourself. There are opportunities in abundance. If you want to find your way inside Christianity, you must start with the man Jesus, the man who was not less but more human than we are. There are two cardinal important things to do as regards the Bible. First in the Old Testament to get at the faith in God which Jesus assumed. That is what matters in the Old Testament. I remember Ronnie Knox summing up a great deal of the Old Testament as 'Baasha.' Don't concentrate on Baasha, but tear out of the Old Testament its heart—the prophetic faith in the one God which Jesus assumed.

Second, in the New Testament to see for yourselves Jesus living the life of faith. Get inside His experience as far as you can. He walked by faith—a real experience. I cannot believe there is any good whatever in those views of the life of Jesus which make everything automatic in virtue of His Deity. His was real experience, real disappointment, real insight into the adjustment of a situation. The New Testament is never afraid of this. Though He was a Son, yet He learnt obedience by suffering—by suffering right through His life. He had to walk by faith in the dark, venturing upon things, upon the unseen—flinging Himself 'over the top' by one great crucial experiment or venture of faith.

This is a great subject. I can only implore you to think it out for yourselves. You will never in these days get inside the Christian faith unless for yourselves you besiege the Gospel story, so that you see the reality of the experience of Jesus. The more you enter into it, the more you will see how that human story leads nowhere. The thing to do is to imagine that you are Simon, that most human, one might say sporting, of men—that reckless, impulsive, warm-blooded, adventurous man. Imagine yourselves to be Simon, following Jesus as he did; and see where you are led. You are led into the dark pit of confusion and shame. Simon realised he was not Jesus. That

is what you realise. Set out with Jesus with no other thought in your mind but that you are going to feel with Him as He goes through His experience, and you come in the end to see you are not Jesus. In the end Jesus leaves you behind; He goes on alone to do the Father's will. That was what happened to Simon. Despite the Master's trust, when the culminating hour came, you know where Simon was. 'Simon, could you not watch with me one hour?' Why was that? Why was Simon left stricken, broken, impotent, proved a traitor to his best self? Ask the question and get the answer. I can only say now, as I pass quickly on, this Fatherhood sounds so attractive, so simple, so inevitable; there is the Father, and we are His children—yet that in the end was just what Simon could not apprehend. He could not associate this humiliation, suffering, death with the Father. You see in the mind of Simon, as he goes with Jesus to Jerusalem, he expected the great day was coming which was to put all things right—the hour of power, the great day of the Lord, the Kingdom of God. That was in his mind, and no words of Jesus could inform his mind, could bring home to him that the day, when it came, was going to bring suffering and death. And so you get the human experience of Jesus as seen by Simon and the others, as seen by us, for we are Simon as it were; and that human experience leads us into the heart of the darkness of this world, the tragedy of life, the darkness of human ambition and disloyalty. That is where the human experience of Jesus, as seen by Simon, leads us—'Why hast thou forsaken me?'

I have been speaking about that in some of the colleges. I simply beg you to try and make it your own. I assure you there are many days of wrestling with the New Testament behind that. It is cardinal to the understanding of the whole of the New Testament. Nobody knew that Jesus was the incarnate Son of God when He died on the Cross. No one could see the Cross in terms of the love of God. They saw the Cross in terms of the tragic. The Cross was not the answer, but the question—the question whether

Jesus was right about the Father. Get inside the heart of this amazing thing, and you are on the way to being overcome by the Gospel.

My subject is Christ—Jesus *after all* the King, the Messiah, the risen Lord. We can pass the Cross to the Resurrection, and, believe me, everything in Christianity depends on the Resurrection. And one of the great subjects you men and women have to face is the problem of the supernatural. Past generations, and even my generation, have been gibbing at the supernatural. People have approached the supernatural in the New Testament very sensitively. We have been like cats on hot bricks about it. When we come across it we don't like it, like a man walking through nettles with bare ankles, trying to leave it on one side. That leads nowhere in the end. If you are going to have a faith that will overcome the world, you have to think things out about the supernatural. You will never make head or tail of Christianity if you leave out the Resurrection. In coming to Christ as the risen Lord, we come to the Father who wrought the great new creative act which raised Him from the dead. We come to the correspondence of the Father with the Son, to the correspondence of the nature of things with Christ. You can read that for yourselves in David Cairns' 'The Reasonableness of the Christian Faith.' I say in coming to the risen Lord we come to the Father who raised Him from the dead, and therefore we come now to the reality of what God is. There is the Father, of whom Jesus spoke, breaking through, taking hold of Simon, lifting him up and making him Peter. That is the Gospel. It is the good news of the reality of God in the Cross; it is the Cross transformed, transfigured out of darkness into light; that which in its fatality had broken Peter, raised him up.

That is the Gospel. That is what drove these men out into the world like thunderbolts. Without that there would never have been a Gospel, never have been a beginning. Simon would have gone a fishing—gone back to the old game. I do not mean to say that simply came through the

Resurrection. I have no time to amplify it. There is a lot more which you must try to understand for yourselves. There was the parting of Jesus from their sight, which they recognised was not the parting to be absent, but the parting to come again. There was the supremely vital, crucial coming of Jesus in the Spirit at Pentecost; the leading step by step out of Judaism, out of the messianic conception into the great catholic gospel of the life of God made known through Christ to all men. There is much else, but it began in the new creative act. When we were without hope, smashed, broken, we were again set upon our feet into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Jesus had spoken of the Father as loving us with a love that seeks until it finds—the love that will never let us go, not even if we crucified the Son.

That, I say, is the Gospel. I don't expect or desire that anyone should understand it because I say it. I say to you 'Varsity men and women that you have to go to that Book and disembowel it, get to the heart of it yourselves. Short of that, you will never have a real faith. We shall never have a real, new, renewed Christianity unless we understand the Bible through and through. No amount of institutional Christianity apart from that will suffice. No amount of hustling—no amount of anything of that sort will suffice unless it is rooted, gripped inside, by the primal experience of the men who were with Jesus.

That is the Gospel. What follows? We have a faith and an object for our faith. We can turn away from ourselves and look outwards to God. God has come to me, made Himself known; and so faith looks to Him, and that is what the Cross means. It is the most practical thing I can say to you. Imagine ourselves kneeling down to say our prayers. What are we to do with wandering thoughts, boredom, and all sorts of things? I set my mind on the Cross, I see it, I grip it with my thoughts; there it stands. I didn't put it up in its present meaning. But there it is, and there God made Himself known. Is there anything more practical than that? It is sheer theology of course.

And then I have the blessedness of penitence. I can hear you saying we are exactly like the people who rejected Jesus. It was not only those wicked Pharisees. I know many of you like to say the Bishops, the ecclesiastical people, the poor high priests, the people who wear purple cassocks—they were the people who crucified Christ. That is quite true, and we have to remember it, we ecclesiastics. But you were in it too. Way back there in the story you can place yourselves. The death of Jesus was the culmination of His rejection, and His rejection was the rejection of the Father. He said, 'If I had come in my name, perhaps you would have received me, but I came in my Father's name, and you did not receive me.' You have heard the Father's name, and you say: 'Not to-day, next week—I have bought this, I am busy with that, I have married a wife and cannot come.' You would have been there in the story of the rejection of Jesus. And yet though we had our share, the people like us, in the crucifixion of Jesus—and this is my point—the love that took Jesus to the Cross was not turned away from us and people like us—the love that has taken the measure of sin and forgiven it. And so there is the blessedness of owning up. That's it. There is nothing too bad to tell Him—this tremendous Lover of ours. No one knows what is in your hearts, and you don't know what's in mine; but there is nothing too shameful to tell Him. Keep it, repress it, and you will find yourself avenged by nature. Nature works with sincerity. The one entirely fatal thing to do is to hush things up. You can own up. Don't you remember the relief of owning up when you were kiddies? Own up; you can never shock Him. I believe we are all agreed about confession up to a point, and I say own up. Do it in the presence of another. It is very humiliating, but saving.

And now I have faith and penitence, but thirdly I have life. There is this life of God, not only there in the Cross stretched out toward us, but in us—life of our life, making us sons, imparting His sonship, so that what was before

our despair, becomes our inspiration. We become like unto Him. Christ, the inimitable example, makes us like Himself.

Lastly the result. I have brotherhood now—the great real secret of what people are to God, not what they are to our little, narrow, pinched, prejudiced, snobly minds.

I remember in my time at Oxford men put off from each other, and ruled people out, by the way they parted their hair. ‘I cannot stick that fellow—I abhor him; he parts his hair in the middle.’ I expect you women are worse at this than we are. You take note of dress. I often see women almost fingering each other’s dresses and saying ‘4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. a yard.’ Outside the pale—4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. a yard!

Think of the barriers, the insurmountable barriers, of nationality. Think of the poor d——d nigger. That is what we call him—we Britishers. The bar of race—that is what my heart is full of—that tremendous inextaggerable issue. Colour again, that is a difference which civilisation is powerless to confront or overcome, which civilisation does but foment and increase. What are you going to do about it? They are real—these differences. 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. is real, you know—it *is* nice to be well dressed; nationality is real; colour is real. Are you going to conquer things like these with a grin? There is only one real secret—when we see what people are to God, when we see others in the light of what they are to Him—there is the spring of decency, neighbourliness, comradeship, justice. My country, Africa, does not want soft stuff; it wants justice.

What I have tried to say has to do with the very heart of personal religion. It goes down to the very marrow. It is the ‘*sine qua non*.’ It is the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is no mere ‘ism.’ It is God in the heart individually, and His people members one of another. It is the Lover of Man with us, the beloved. That is the personal half of it. But you must not think of it in terms of utility. You must not hitch on God as a kind of patent social reformer, a general improvement agency. If you are to think of utility, it is like marrying a girl to get

a housekeeper. You must not let the dust of this world tarnish this heavenly supernatural and transcendental thing. Our souls with God—God with the soul.

And the resolutions that follow. Read your von Hügel to understand and keep them untarnished by utilitarian considerations. And yet there are results. That follows inevitably. Give me the man and woman whose heart is in union with Christ; they are the men and women who shift things in this world. They do it by what they are, more than those hustling, tiring, and tired people who fuss round putting things straight. It is the saints in the end who have been the practical reformers.

There I draw to a close. We come home to the Father because He has brought us home. Yet there is this also—that which is verified and proved real in the Cross is not just merely that there is a Father, but that there is a fatherly order of things, that this world is His world, which has certain laws, certain principles of reality, the fatherly nature of things. And this is of supreme practical importance for the world. Not what are you going to build, but rather what are you going to build on. What shall be the foundation; with what are you going to leaven life? There is the stuff of life—in the great world of the state, in international affairs. There is the dough—with what are you going to leaven it? Just with idealism—that which you project from yourselves with well-meaning intention? Or shall it be with conviction, rooted in reality? Jesus said: You are going to build. What are you going to build on? I have given you main principles. If you build on them you build on reality, you build on the rock. And that is what you have to go and do. If you don't do it, you will shirk this great indescribable contest that concerns this generation. I don't believe we chaps out of the war are going to rebuild the world. Many of us are broken. Many of those I know came from the war really impaired in nerve. You fellows are untainted, unspoiled, unmanacled. What are you going to do? Do you think the war is over? The war was only like the lightning

that precedes the thunder. What side are you going to be on? Can you not see the King? Will you not rise and fall in and follow? Can you see the two sides: can you distinguish between the right and the wrong? But distinguish also between the wrong and the wrong-doer. Stake all on the venture. Leap into His arms, and you will find Him. It is real. Would to God I could bear witness to the reality which verifies, confirms the venture of faith; but I tell you I know it is true. There are all sorts of things inside me that I cannot understand. I cannot understand the mystery of life, the storms of life that beat on me, the silence of death that staggers and beggars me; but deeper than all my own infirmities, deeper than night and day, is God!

The Practice of Prayer

CONSIDERED FROM THE STANDPOINT OF PSYCHOLOGY

BY WILLIAM BROWN, M.D.

(Wilde Reader in Mental Philosophy.)

THE question of prayer strikes at the very centre of the problem of religion. If there is to be religion at all, if religion is to be an effective thing, and not merely a subjective illusion in individual minds, then, in some way or other, prayer must stand as a method of communion with the Divine. On the other hand, if religion is an illusion, prayer, as prayer, disappears, and we shall need another name for what we have hitherto called prayer. The problem has several aspects. I propose to-night to approach it purely from the psychological point of view; but with the express intention of showing that the psychological point of view, however important, is entirely inadequate for a complete explanation, and that we must ultimately pass on from Psychology to Philosophy.

A good deal of psychological investigation has been carried on during the last thirty or forty years into the nature of the religious consciousness and religious experience. This research had its turning point when Professor William James gave his Gifford lectures on 'Varieties of Religious Experience.' James considered prayer to be an essential part of religion, and took prayer in the sense of a communion with the Spirit of the Universe. He was inclined to believe in the efficacy of prayer in an objective as well as in a subjective sense. Another part of his theory was that many of the changes which appear to take place through prayer and through religious ceremonies may really take place through the working of the sub-conscious. He appeals to the 'subliminal self.' He suggests that the subliminal may be the medium of communication between the indi-

vidual consciousness and the spiritual universe. The difficulty about such a theory is that it opens the door to all kinds of popular exploitation of the idea of the sub-conscious. James appeals to the sub-conscious as it was conceived of in earlier forms of theory, held at a time when little was known about it. If appeal is made to it in a scientific sense, the appeal should be carried as far as it will go. James did not do this in his book; but since he wrote, it has been attempted; and conclusions have sometimes been drawn which are, in my opinion, a *reductio ad absurdum*.

The sub-conscious is much more real to us now than it was in James's time, because of the great advance made in the study of pathological cases. We have every reason to believe in the existence of the sub-conscious, and that diseases of it show certain characteristics and produce certain phenomena in the conscious mind. Conclusions, however, drawn from the study of nervous and mental diseases have been freely applied to the normal mind. This is quite illegitimate, even if we admit that everyone is to a certain extent abnormal and that abnormality is a matter of degree. No hard-and-fast dividing line can be drawn between normal and abnormal, nevertheless the tendency at the present day to explain the normal in terms of the abnormal is scientifically unsound.

You are all aware of the general outline of the modern theories in regard to abnormal psychology. As the result of mental conflict repression may take place. Repressed tendencies may exist in the sub-conscious, they may be accompanied by memories split off from the main system of memory, and persist as active forces showing themselves in a disguised form in the field of full consciousness. Because of such repressed tendencies the conscious mind may show certain peculiar characteristics.

One such characteristic is known as 'projection.' A patient, for instance, may have a delusion, having no foundation in fact, that various people are jealous of, or hostile, to him. In reality this is an attempt to account

to himself for some unexplained feeling of his own by postulating as its cause this attitude of other people. It is argued by some writers that belief in God is similarly a 'projection' upon the Universe of man's inner feelings.

In answer to this, I would point out that, while the phenomenon of projection is an undoubted fact which can be verified in certain cases, these cases are all pathological. Also instances of projection in these pathological cases, when we investigate them, are found to be of a pretty definite character. By analysis we can discover how they arose; and in every case we find they are due to some definitely abnormal process. Hence to generalise and use the pathological conception of projection in dealing with normal psychology is an illegitimate use of the concept. The normal mind is one thing, the abnormal mind is another; and the mere fact that abnormal tendencies may be present in any man, however apparently normal, does not alter that distinction.

There is another concept which is found to be of great use in abnormal psychology—the concept of 'regression.' When the mind comes up against a difficulty that is too great for it, it may—if it is diseased to a sufficient extent, and if its unity has been sufficiently undermined by previous repression—develop a tendency to 'regress,' that is to step back to a more primitive mode of response to the situation. The individual may approximate to the infantile in his reaction to his environment. He runs away from his difficulties instead of adequately facing them. He reacts to the situation as he reacted when a young child. Then, before he became fully aware of the difficulties and responsibilities of life, he had been able to get complete mental and spiritual support from his parents' love.

Some modern writers have suggested that the resting on the love of God characteristic of religious experience is to be explained as a 'regression'—i.e. as the unconscious effort of the adult individual to find in the Father of the Universe the mental and spiritual support which he once got from his own parents. And they offer a similar explana-

tion of the often very striking phenomenon of 'conversion.' For some reason or other difficulties have arisen which have made it impossible for the mind to go on as it has been going on ; a regression takes place, and infantile tendencies come out ; the individual throws himself upon the unseen Parent. He is not aware that he is doing this. He is merely aware of the sort of feeling he gets at the moment. Here again, we are told, we see the pathological condition of regression, the response of the sub-conscious mind to an apparently insuperable difficulty in the environment by reverting to the childish age when such difficulties were dealt with by its parents.

My main criticism of such a position is this. All the individual cases of regression actually studied are obviously pathological, not normal. When we analyse our patients we can state with fair accuracy the distinction between the normal part of their mind and the pathological part. This latter shows itself first in the form of symptoms. The cause of the symptoms, as well as the symptoms, is something pathological. They arise from the part of the mind that is not normal. Now where the bodily organism is concerned, the study of the normal and of the abnormal are regarded as so far distinct as to form the subject matter of two different sciences—Physiology and Pathology. The physiologist can often learn much from the pathologist : but the idea that it is legitimate, without any qualification, to draw inferences from the functioning of a diseased organism to that of the healthy body, would be laughed to scorn. Yet that is what is often done by certain exponents of the 'New Psychology.'

I pass on to the question how far can Psychology help us in the interpretation of religious experience, and in particular, the experience of prayer ? On the subjective side it is perfectly within its rights when it draws a comparison between the effects of prayer and the effects produced by certain other mental means. There is one such means with which prayer is sometimes compared, namely the practice of auto-suggestion. Suggestion treatment is often

found to be of benefit, not only to patients who are ill, but to people who are apparently in normal health. To a great extent the suggestion is beneficial because they are the victims of bad auto-suggestion. Bad auto-suggestion must be neutralised by good counter-suggestion. When a patient really wishes to get well, and believes the word of the doctor that he will be able to get well, results may follow. He may get better because he has now accepted that idea in place of the opposite idea, now that fear has been removed, anxiety checked, and the expectation of recovery has been instilled into his mind.

There are certain analogies to this in what happens in many cases of prayer. The individual is in an unsatisfactory situation, he wishes that situation to be altered, and he prays that it may be altered. In praying he concentrates his mind on what he desires and wishes to occur; and he does so with the belief and in the expectation that, through the goodness of God, it will occur. Very often that benefit does occur. Accordingly you find many people saying that prayer is only auto-suggestion.

Personally I am disposed to reverse the statement, and to say that auto-suggestion is prayer. Auto-suggestion, where it succeeds, is, I believe, much more nearly akin to prayer than is generally recognised by those interested only in the treatment of functional nerve disease by suggestion. I mean that it is rarely successful unless the patient has at least a sub-conscious belief that 'the Universe is friendly.' Auto-suggestion admittedly demands 'confidence'; but what does this mean? Just as the mere fact of seeking for the cause of a particular phenomenon involves as its intellectual basis the tacit assumption of the principle of the Uniformity of Nature; so I would urge, the emotional basis of a particular auto-suggestion is some measure of confidence, implicitly felt if not explicitly confessed, in the general beneficence of the Nature of Things. In religious natures this confidence expresses itself definitely as faith in God; and, with this explicitly assumed, auto-suggestion is quite clearly a form of prayer.

I have come to this conclusion from studying a number of my own patients and my own consciousness. For myself I find it is practically impossible to carry out auto-suggestion with conviction without it being really a form of prayer, since some kind of belief in the spiritual nature of the Universe seems to be implied in the belief that power is there to make the result suggested come true. It is perfectly impossible for me to believe mechanically ; and in auto-suggestion merely thinking mechanically of a desired result is more likely to prejudice than to bring about its realisation. I know that some patients have benefited without the slightest element of *conscious* belief. But I find that quite a number of patients state that, even though it may not be so at the beginning, yet in the course of time, as the auto-suggestion works, they are getting more and more what I should call a feeling of 'faith' in a Power beyond themselves, helping them towards health. And the point I wish to emphasise is that this increase of faith cannot be regarded as a disease phenomenon, seeing that it is one that emerges in the course of a cure and is a thing that progressively develops as the patient is returning from a state of mental disease to a state of mental health.

Patients sometimes volunteer the statement that in a curious way suggestion treatment has made them feel more religious. Many of them say they had lost and have now recovered the feeling of the sense of the Divine, of being in touch with a Reality beyond themselves. Some speak as if taking this treatment has caused them to pass through a kind of experience analogous to conversion. A striking case was that of a boy of twelve suffering from nervous trouble. After treatment by suggestion for some time with little result, he suddenly burst out crying and said, 'Now I really know I am going to be well.' He was absolutely certain of it ; and he has been well ever since. The analogy, so far as it goes, would suggest a view of the phenomenon of religious conversion quite the reverse of that I have previously criticised. It would look as if

religious conversion, so far from being a symptom of a diseased mind, is a phenomenon of the recovery of psychological health. Psychologically, it is the passage of the personality from its previous state of 'conflict' and 'dissociation' to a state of unification.

In further support of the view that—speaking from the purely psychological point of view—much of auto-suggestion is prayer, is the fact that my medical experience shows that the difficulty which many people feel in praying is often found to have a pathological origin. Patients come to one suffering from depression who have hitherto enjoyed and taken active part in religion, who have had intense conviction, and found suddenly all their convictions have disappeared. And the sad part is that sometimes they even doubt whether they ever really had those convictions. In those particular cases the inability to believe is one symptom of their general pathological state. Their emotional life has turned inward, they have lost touch with the outer world, they no longer feel contact with other people. In cases like this, analysis usually effects a cure. One of my patients, after three hours' analysis which elicited the causes of his general pathological state, said: 'Now I can pray again; before I could not.'

Such a case illustrates how repression or other strain on the mind can cut a patient off and psychologically isolate him, not only from his ordinary friends and environment, but, as it were, from the Universe. It also has a moral, even for those of us who consider ourselves normal, in regard to the practice of prayer. If ever we find we are getting into a state where our faith is disappearing, and we are full of intense loneliness, it may be well to analyse ourselves and our circumstances, go back over our past lives, call up early experiences, and bring them, as well as our sins in the past, before God, and thus find a starting-point for a new faith.

But you will need a very thorough self-examination to face the difficulties yourself. Psychology teaches that what most needs to be confessed is rarely on the surface.

A patient, for example, may feel antagonistic to one of his parents. Friends may have told him : You must make yourself love your father. But he has found that, by persisting in such an effort, he has only made himself worse. But if, instead of being dealt with in that way, he were to be analysed, and his past gone over—especially his early relationship with his mother or father—some ancient grievance, real or imaginary, or some other experience might be brought to mind, with the result that this particular experience would be reconciled with the rest of his memories. Then, no longer actuated by an unconscious impulse to resent or to rebel, he would find things altogether changed. The reason why so many religious people get so little good result from self-examination is because it is not sufficiently thorough nor sufficiently scientific, and is limited too much to their present mental state.

One aspect of the subject of prayer I have kept to the last—as being to my mind the most important—the mystical aspect. Prayer may be a petition for some benefit. But there is another form of prayer in which the endeavour is merely to get into communion with the Divine. I say ‘endeavour’; but the more you try the less likely you are to succeed. If you desire it and you can believe, you may do so. Sometimes, when by the use of contemplative prayer you have got into a passive state—allowing your mind to dwell in thought, retreating from the present world and the objects near you, passing beyond, rising above, the circumstances of the moment, without specially striving—there may come to you a peculiar feeling of the certainty of God’s existence, and that everything is right with the world. This feeling of communion with the Divine is a mystic feeling; and I suppose, in greater or less degree, everyone has at some time or other had the experience. It is an experience that can be cultivated; it is one that can suffer from pathological intensification and degeneration; but in itself it is an experience of the healthy mind—and it is one that carries its own conviction with it. It has different stages. You

can have mystic feeling, a feeling of union with the universe, at very different levels. At its lowest you can have it in physical exercise. I have, when riding, known the experience of feeling oneself in absolute harmony with nature. At a higher level it may be experienced by the philosopher struggling to pass beyond conditions of ordinary scientific thought, passing at the back of questions like space, time, mortality. You get it in its highest form in religion. And it is to be noted that, in so far as it is considered as a form of prayer, it is one in which you feel you do not need the help of forms, ceremonies, or even words.

In what I have said to you this evening I conceived it best to confine my remarks on prayer to those aspects of the subject which fall within the limits of Psychology. I have endeavoured, in the brief space at my disposal, to suggest to you one or two ways in which practical medical psychology has something to contribute to the problem of prayer, so far as, what I may call, its 'psychological mechanism' is concerned. And I have tried to indicate why the idea, current in many quarters, that modern Psychology has proved that prayer is an exploded superstition does not seem to me to rest on a truly scientific basis. But on the larger question of the validity of prayer, Psychology, I must repeat, has nothing to say. The validity of prayer depends on the existence and character of God. That is a question with which Psychology does not and cannot concern itself. For its solution we must turn from Psychology to Philosophy.

I have spoken as a Psychologist. I should, however, run the risk of leaving you under a misapprehension unless I added two things. First, that the study of Philosophy has convinced me that the belief that there is a 'Not ourselves that makes for righteousness' rests on a basis in reason that is intellectually adequate. Secondly, that, if I may speak no longer as a Psychologist but as a man, the experience of life confirms my belief that the possibility of some communion between that Power and the individual is not an illusion.

Christianity as Fellowship

BY THE REV. FATHER FRERE, C.R.

I HEARD a criticism a little while ago which took the following form: 'There is more good-fellowship in the tap-room of an ordinary public-house than in any of the ordinary Churches.' That may serve as the starting-point for considering our subject—Christianity and Fellowship—for as you see it seems to start almost with a denial, stating that Christianity is in no way expert in fellowship, and has to begin in very queer places if it is to learn the art. I am not quite sure how far the statement is true. It has that little spice of truth which makes it an epigram worth making. But if you picture the scene to yourselves, you very soon see how far it is true; and you get to a state of things in which its truth ceases. Picture that tap-room of the ordinary public-house—picture the good-fellowship. It is quite good as far as it goes, and very real and genuine. There lies the element of truth that is perfectly sound. But picture the opening of the door and the entry of an uncongenial spirit into the tap-room—let us say the parson. (Unless he is an exceptional parson, in which case everything would be well; or let us say the squire, about which I may say the same thing.) What do you imagine the effect would be? Good-fellowship dies down. A gloom is cast over the proceedings, and the good-fellowship is spoilt; the more so if the incomer takes up a prominent position in front of the fire and proceeds to take in hand the conduct of the meeting.

What does that mean? It means that the fellowship only goes a certain way, and at a certain point disappears—that it depends upon all the people present being congenial spirits. Directly some outside party not so congenial is introduced, the fellowship ends. It is fellowship essentially based on a common interest. There are many fellowships of this sort very familiar to us. The world is full of them. We are continually rearranging ourselves

in groups on that sort of principle. We get our little cliques—they get together because they have some particular interest—a fellowship perfectly genuine as far as it goes; but no more than that. You get it expanded in bigger things—this fellowship based simply on common interests. We hear a good deal about class consciousness—I am afraid it is only too true there is a good deal of it. It is exactly a fellowship based for good or evil upon a certain common interest. Take politics. You have political parties getting together—a very heterogeneous collection of people very often, but able to form a fellowship of common interest because they have a particular kind of politics. Come to a higher specimen still, and one which provokes more respect. When a nation gets together and realises its nationality, we have a high respect for it, and call this patriotism. Far be it from me to say a word against it; but it may be no more than a fellowship depending on a common interest.

Notice about all these kinds of fellowship, that they are satisfactory up to a certain point. At a certain point they become unsatisfactory. In other words, they break down. You notice also in regard to all these fellowships that they begin with fellowship, knit people together, make units and coherences. But when they reach the limit, they go precisely in the opposite direction—make divisions, become divisive and disuniting forces. How many small villages are entirely spoilt because there are cliques in them. In how many small towns you may have your whole machinery of local government paralysed by political party spirit being introduced into the municipal elections, with the result that instead of getting people really interested in municipal government for its own sake, you get them merely interested from some party political standpoint. Fellowship when it ceases to be a help becomes a positive and disastrous hindrance. The same thing is seen in class consciousness. It may be a good thing to have a certain amount of class consciousness; but when you come to the point where class consciousness makes you hostile to other

classes, fellowship vanishes. When you get to the highest point, to patriotism itself and international relationships—we know as we look on Europe to-day the disastrous results of the limitations of patriotism. Just because patriotism carries you splendidly to a certain point, and stops there, you have these terrific international animosities. Even the highest sort of fellowship ceases at that point to be a unitive force, and makes for division.

That sounds very gloomy. Certainly individuals cannot reform the world, and yet how are these big problems to be settled if the only result of bringing people together in the mass is that they are more combative in the mass than as individuals. What is the good of trying to get unity in the world if these attempts at unity land you in the last resort in the bitterest kinds of hatred? It looks as if fellowship is going to be of no use for the reform of the world.

Men vary in their capacity for fellowship. There are people with a great gift of fellowship. I have heard it said of a man in Canada: 'He is a good mixer.' An excellent phrase describing admirably some very useful people. On the whole they are exceptions, people with a particular gift. But there are not enough 'good mixers' to go round, to form up and tackle the enormous tasks which are crying out for more fellowship in some form as their only hope of solution?

We seem in a desperate position. Let us try another tack. Leave the bar parlour and the tap-room and the whole of that sort of association based upon a common interest. That does not seem to carry us as far as we want to go. Leave on one side all the natural sort of gifts that do not carry us as far as we want. Neither of these things is really adequate when you are tackling the great problem of producing a real, lasting, and uplifting fellowship. If we are leaving the natural, we must go to the supernatural. 'Ye, being many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another.' This is far truer than the pretty little aphorism about the tap-room. We are

starting on a different task, trying to reach a fellowship more effective. It sounds more hopeful; but exactly how far will it carry us? Is religion to give us this fellowship which common interests and natural qualities do not really provide? I think I can see people shaking their heads and saying: 'Well, if he is going to try and prove that, he has a hard nut to crack.' For as we see manifestations of the Christian life, they do not seem to be particularly unitive; and after all, though our friend of the tap-room was a little over-enthusiastic about the fellowship there, he was not far out when he spoke of the very little fellowship sometimes found in Christian gatherings. Will that really help us?

Is Christianity a fellowship, and if so, will it have the power to accomplish these great tasks which cry for fellowship at the present time? The worst of it is that religious fellowships may be worked on precisely the same lines as those fellowships founded on common interests or natural qualities, and may break down in the same way and for the same reason. Even Religion has a fatal tendency to be run on the basis of common interests. You get groups interested in a particular form of religion, and they organise for that particular end. Very soon they find it necessary, in opposition to another group of religious people, to defend their particular interest. Or you may get a religious body standing together as a whole, organising itself as a party, and you will get opposed to it an anti-religious party. Then you will find the same thing happening—the fellowship which looked so hopeful breaks down, and even becomes disastrous, because very soon a rival fellowship is erected against it.

All around us we are conscious of people making a deeper criticism against Christianity than the one I began with. An anxious demand for fellowship comes from those who show most zeal in carrying out the great constructive reforms of which fellowship is the necessary basis. They show strong dissatisfaction with Christian people, and even with Christianity itself. 'Your Churches,

what use are they? 'They don't help us.' From how many points does this come! The men who are interested in social reform are continually flinging in your face the very principles of Christianity itself, the very example of our Master, in scorn. 'These are His principles, and these are your principles,' they say; 'if you only acted up to them you would be on our side, and we should be working together. But you stand for the preservation of all we are against, and for the repression of everything of which we are in favour.'

What use has the politician for religion? Sometimes he is frankly annoyed with it—when it comes in and disturbs other questions already sufficiently complicated. He does not regard the Christian element in politics as something which is going to pour oil on troubled political waters. That is the politician in his more complimentary and polite attitude. His less polite attitude is to pay no attention at all to religion, to say that it doesn't make a farthing's worth of difference what religious people think. Look on the world of international politics, and see how lamentably true this is. Christianity stands humiliated at present in face of the great world tasks, because the people who have the direction in national and international affairs are not the least inclined to look on Christianity as a fellowship; they do not look on it as having something to offer for the rebuilding of a shattered world, still less as being the essential thing, the one indispensable thing, that is necessary if the shattered world is to be rebuilt.

Someone or other once said 'Christianity has failed,' and some witty person—G. K. Chesterton, I think—replied, 'It has not failed; it has never yet been tried.' Both things are true. Let us analyse: in so far as Christianity has been tried and been a failure, let us try to find out where the failure is; let us also try to find out at what point it has never been tried, at any rate in our own day. Let me put a bit of analysis to you in two parcels.

With regard to the text from Romans: 'Ye, being many, are one body in Christ.' I am inclined to suggest:

that we have not so far taken enough account of two words: 'In Christ.' We have let that pass by—treated it as a mere detail of the statement. But these two words are much more than that—they are the heart and essence of it. If we have not given them their full strength, it is no wonder that Christian bodies, and that Christendom itself, have failed to be one body in Christ. May it not be the case that religion, in so far as it has failed, has failed because it has not thought enough of that essential part of the fellowship? Members, not in one another, but members in Christ. And in so far as Christianity has failed to be a fellowship, in so far as it has not yet been tried, it is because sufficient emphasis has not been laid on that.

Let me give you a little amateur physics. Would it not be true to say that as you analyse the various component parts of our material earth, you arrive at a nature or force, which we may call an explosive and divisive force, tending always to separate, even to disintegrate? But on the other hand, is it not also true, as has been shown lately, that right down at the bottom and underneath, as part of the essence and nature of this whole physical world, there is to be found ultimately, not this explosive, divisive force, but a force of a precisely opposite character, adhesive and attractive, building together all the tiniest parts of which matter is composed? May we not say that the whole of our material world is based upon one root principle of some mysterious force round which everything gathers, through which everything is knit together into the unity it really is.

'In Christ.' Here we have got to the bottom of things, to the very end, to the Person round whom every real, lasting unity and fellowship is built, and without whom there can be no fellowship in the full and final sense of the word. That is the sort of fellowship we want. In Christ we can cohere; all those other attempts to link up the personal man and his interests fail, because all lack the one essential thing. They get you no farther than those divisive and explosive forces of the world which are con-

tinually breaking up things. But our coherence being in Christ, we have got to the bottom of things. In other words, if this is true, our hope of gathering together a real Christian fellowship in this, as in any other age, depends upon individuals getting a different kind of spiritual electricity to hold them together, not the explosive kind that ultimately makes division, but the one that essentially builds all together into one 'in Christ.' And it is round and on that that every real lasting idea of Christian fellowship, and Christianity as a fellowship, must be built.

Put in the forefront of your minds these two words, because I believe they give us the real answer we are seeking, and the real prospect of a Christian unity and fellowship, to which can safely be entrusted, under the good providence of God, those stupendous tasks that lie before our generation and the world. 'In Christ.' What do the two words mean? Like so many of the great religious phrases, the simpler they are, the more baffling they become. You say it makes all the difference? Precisely what difference does it make, and precisely why? Perhaps we can get at it by thinking of what is the opposite. Human action springs from one or other of two main centres. The natural one is self-interest. Take a specimen day. You get up, and think what is going to happen to-day. 'I hope this will happen because I like it, I hope that won't happen because I don't like it.' When you get to the end of the day, the natural man says: 'On the whole, a beastly day.' Or if you are more optimistic you say, 'It has been a splendid day: I got exactly what I wanted. What a comfortable place is bed.' And between these two extreme points he has been working on the same principle all the way through—he has been considering all the day through what will or will not suit him. This is self, and it is the source of all the trouble. That person cannot really be in fellowship with anybody else, because there is nobody else in his world. He is his world, and the rest are only materials he wishes to subordinate to himself. That spirit is absolutely incapable of fellowship. It does

not take the rest of the world into account. The man who is in Christ gets up in the morning as the natural man does, and asks, 'How shall I please Him best?' When he comes to the end of the day he asks, 'Well, how has it been? I am afraid I have grieved Him a good many times. I am sorry.' That is the person on whom fellowship can be built.

Yes, but you will say: 'How get there? I see what you mean. But I don't see how it is to be reached. It involves tremendous change—a change of the whole centre of my being, a change of the deepest springs of conduct. This change from being in myself to being "in Christ." Of this, at any rate, we can be certain—it is God's desire, plan, and purpose that you should reach it by one way or another. Some reach it by one tremendous flinging act, and it is done, momentarily in a sense, though prepared in the long providence of God—like the conversion of St. Paul and many others—that splendid, magnificent moment in life. But it may not be attained as the result of a splendid moment, but by patient plodding, day after day, trying to think 'I will not act that way, because it is not His way.' The process of getting new electricity, round which our whole being may re-establish and reform itself, may be a slow plodding process, going on day after day with great perseverance, a perseverance which God will give us, which we have not in ourselves. So one way or another it can be reached, and must be reached.

The man in Christ is a new creature. Therefore the man who has learned this secret somehow has reached, is reaching, or reaching out towards, the point of being in Christ. There is the man you can look to to do something to contribute towards the new heaven and earth, because he is already in himself becoming a new creature. There is the man round whom God can begin to build a new world. He will be an attractive force round which will gather men like himself; and others will gather around merely by the attraction of the thing, by seeing something you cannot analyse, cannot describe, do not understand,

but cannot fail to respond to. And thus there comes into being a group of new creatures to whom God will entrust one little task in building up a new heaven and a new earth.

Dream about it. It is a splendid thing to dream about. Dream about it, but don't dream all the time. Wake up sometimes and try to do something. Dreaming is splendid—if it alternates with action. Set yourselves stubbornly to the task of being some use to God for carrying out the dreams. And if you say: Well, how, what can I do? I will merely say what a simple thing it is, for we have found what God needs and what the world needs—the fellowship of people in Christ. And if I am one of those people capable of forming such a group, capable of doing something to make Christianity a real fellowship and a real restoring force in the world, the immediate thing to be done is so practical and simple. Wake up, do all the things that help you to live in Christ. Anybody can do that. Pray to Him, speak to Him, love Him, draw near to Him in your communions, think about Him in those things that lie quite close to you. You can get your groups, as you have already in the colleges, and they are a power. You can get your groups in the municipality, and if you could only have them in political life there would be much less diplomacy and much more unity. Your nation may become itself a group not ceasing to be as patriotic as it ever was, but basing its patriotism on thinking of itself last and the rest of the world first.

There is the real Christian unity, a fellowship that is lasting, indestructible, that begins here and extends infinitely far, and that nothing can limit. It is the one great force which can really restore a disintegrated world. And as you and I learn to do that, our lives become big with an unimaginable bigness and variety, reposing centrally 'in Christ'—capable of romantic adventures in all directions, full of a richness not to be had in any other way. So shall we seek to take our place in this great Christian fellowship, contributing what we can, learning the simple lesson, entering into the joy of the life and the work, and looking joyously for the reward.

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